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1970/10/20

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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1639
INFORMATION
October 20, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE FILES

SUBJECT: Vietnam Ad Hoc Working Group Meeting, October 16, 1970

Ambassador Sullivan referred to the President's five-point initiative, and said that the members of the group should be aware that the discussions leading up to this initiative had been handled by a very small number of people. The actual proposals were essentially the recommendations of NSSM 94. Consultations with the GVN had gone extremely smoothly, although there had been some problems with the Cambodians. The Lao had been very cooperative. In discussing the matter with the GVN, we had had technical problems in that we had been under instructions to limit our discussions to Thieu, and Ky had not been brought aboard. This was why he had been suddenly called back from Paris -- it was imperative that he not be permitted to say anything publicly there which would contradict the President's line.

Sullivan reported that Ambassador Bui Diem had just talked by telephone with Ky in Paris, who had agreed to leave the question of the timing of his visit to the U.S. up to Bui Diem. Sullivan had talked with Dr. Kissinger, who would get agreement from the President on a meeting in late November. Apart from this meeting, the rest of the visit would be an unofficial one and would focus upon visits by Ky to military installations in the U.S. where Vietnamese were being trained. Sullivan asked General Karhohs for recommendations on what places Ky might visit at which there were large numbers of Vietnamese. In addition, Ky would probably want to visit the Air Force Academy. While in the U.S. he would go on radio and T. V., and Bui Diem had agreed to check out his appearances with Sullivan. No official announcement on Ky's visit would be made by us until after the elections, although it might be hard to keep Ky himself from speaking out. Ky would also see the Vice President while in the U.S.

Sullivan brought up the question of a paper prepared by AID on proposed levels and methods for providing economic support to Vietnam. Mr. Arthur wanted to know how this paper would be handled bureaucratically, i.e. how would it be presented to the appropriate departments and agencies for

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consideration? I suggested that it be forwarded to Dr. Kissinger via the Ad Hoc Group, after which it might be circulated by the NSC to interested parties for comment. I noted several criticisms which had been proposed to the paper by Wayne Smith's staff, particularly the fact that it still seemed to represent a piecemeal rather than a long-range approach in meeting our economic requirements in Vietnam. In this respect, Arthur noted that IDA had a contract from AID to do a long-range planning study for economic assistance through FY 74. He also noted that in the absence of any firm planning on the Peterson Report, AID was going ahead on the FY 72 budget submission as before. This budget would not include a stabilization fund (the anticipated short-fall between total GVN requirements and AID spending levels as of FY 71) and AID would need to know how to handle this aspect of the budget by the end of October.

Sullivan addressed the POW issue by referring to a memorandum sent by Secretary Laird to the President on recommendations for further initiatives, which Dr. Kissinger had then sent to the Ad Hoc Committee for action. Sullivan was preparing to send a recommendation back to the effect that the President's initiative had overtaken Secretary Laird's recommendations and that nothing additional would be required at this time. He understood, however, that a second paper on POWs had been taken by Secretary Laird aboard the President's plane during the recent European visit, and Laird had probably handed this paper to the President directly.

Sullivan mentioned the conversation Congressman Price had had with DRV Representative Vy in Paris, remarking that State was "mushily opposed" to any follow-through on the Price matter at this time. He foresaw difficulties for the Administration if Vy actually were to come to the U.S., and preferred instead to follow through on the invitation extended by Xuan Thuy to Senator Pell to visit Hanoi, which involved no reciprocity. It was the consensus of the group that Congressman Price would not be given a flat "no", but would be held in reserve pending the outcome of the Pell initiative. A memo was being prepared for Dr. Kissinger setting forth the legal and other problems connected with a visit by Vy.

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Sullivan said that he would be going back to Dr. Kissinger with a reclama on Dr. Kissinger's changes to the draft cable to Saigon on the ICRC desires for U.S. help in facilitating visits by ICRC representatives to GVN civilian prisons. Sullivan explained that he was trying to preserve the principle that governments which had picked up civilians on the field of battle retained some responsibility for these civilians even after they had been turned over to civilian authorities of another government. What we were concerned about here was the safety of the civilians who had been picked up by the VC in Hue and who now may be in North Vietnamese hands. We might at some stage wish to ask the ICRC to check into the well-being of these civilians in North Vietnam. Sullivan stated that he would also check with State's legal people to see if Dr. Kissinger's change would still safeguard this principle.

Sullivan declared that there was a very bad situation in the Phu Quoc Prison Camp, where nearly 40,000 NVA POWs are being held. A message had come in from Saigon reporting the bad conditions, but there was no indication that anything was being done to improve the situation. General Karhohs commented that Secretary Laird had hit the ceiling when this message had arrived, and a message was going from McCain to General Abrams by back-channel to take action. A regular State-Defense message would also go out.

General Karhohs announced that the 4th phase withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam would be completed as of October 25. He explained in some detail the Army manpower shortages throughout the world would make the continuing rapid withdrawal of U.S. forces imperative, e.g. the additional 40,000 to leave by the end of the year. (A breakdown of the forces above is at Tab A.)

General Smith noted that we should become concerned over the matter of excess equipment being left behind by our forces in Vietnam. If we allowed this equipment to be dissipated or to deteriorate, we would have real trouble with Congress, as well as with our allies who were hoping to get their hands on quantities of it. However, the Army did not have enough people on hand to maintain the excess equipment nor did it have funds to hire civilians to do the job.

Sullivan referred to the Fulbright Amendments, wondering if there was now general agreement on the effects that these amendments would have on our current operations. General Smith gave as the Defense viewpoint

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an interpretation that present contracts for operations now underway could be continued. Sullivan asked for a reading from Defense as to whether we should still try to renegotiate the terms under which we were supporting 3rd-country troop contributions. We might, for example, want to reduce payments for troops being brought in to replace others as they rotated out.

General Smith observed that on the question of the disposition of the Thai forces in Vietnam if they returned to Thailand, he had resisted clearing three versions of a draft State cable on this subject on the grounds that it did not seem to be positive enough in accepting an active role for these forces in Thailand. He wondered why there had never been anything said in messages to Thailand along the lines that we wanted Thai forces to be kept in being along the Cambodian border. I agreed and noted that the White House had not cleared this same draft cable.

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